

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, as amended.

By this amendment, withdrawn claims 30-49 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 13 has also been amended in accordance with the Examiner's recommendation.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the indicated allowable feature of Claim 3, with Claim 3 being cancelled. Indicated allowable Claims 7 and 18 have been amended into independent form.

Thus, it is believed that Claims 1-2 and 4-29 are in condition for allowance.

Similarly, it is believed newly added claims 50-68 are patentably distinguishable from the cited references. Specifically, Independent Claim 50 recites, *inter alia*, at least partially inflating the protective cover to extend the uninflated balloon from a first configuration to a second configuration, and at least partially inflating the balloon, wherein at least a portion of said balloon is inflated within at least a portion of said inner region of said protective cover. Independent Claim 57 recites, *inter alia*, providing an uninflated balloon, at least partially inflating the protective cover to elevate the uninflated balloon to a filling position and at least partially inflating the balloon, wherein at least a portion of said balloon is inflated within at least a portion of the protective cover. Independent Claim 64 recites, *inter alia*, at least partially inflating a protective cover, at least partially inflating a balloon, wherein at least a portion of said balloon is inflated within at least a portion of the protective cover, the operation of at least partially inflating said protective cover occurring prior to said step of inflating said balloon, opening at least a portion of said protective cover and releasing said balloon.

At least the above features are neither taught nor suggested by the cited art. The claims that depend therefrom are further distinguishable from the cited are for at least the above reasons and the additional feature(s) recited therein.

*Application Serial No. 10/821,799*  
*Reply to Office Action of October 12, 2006*

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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